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PAGE 01 BUENOS 04521 262132 Z

67

ACTION CU-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ADP-00 /015 W
----- 057405

R 261745 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2587

INFO USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

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STATE FOR CU/ ARA; USIA FOR ILA.

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: SCUL, AR

SUBJECT: REFLECTIONS ON THE ARGENTINE CULTURAL SCENE

SUMMARY: REFLECTIONS ON THE CULTURAL SCENE OF THE FIRST MONTH OF THE GOA INCLUDE IMPORTANT APPOINTMENTS AND PRONOUNCEMENTS IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF UNCERTAINTY. FAILURE TO NAME A MAYOR OF BA HAS LEFT SUBORDINATE MUNICIPAL CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS WITH INTERIM LEADERSHIP, PROGRAMS PLANNED BY PREDECESSORS AND A BUDGET DEFICIT.

1. APPOINTMENTS TO THE POSITIONS OF NATIONAL SECRETARY OF CULTURE (DR ARTURO LOPEZ PENA), INTERIM MUNICIPAL SECRETARY OF CULTURE (LIC RICARDO FABRIS); DIRECTOR OF THE SAN MARTIN THEATRE COMPLEX (JUAN O. PONFERRADA); NATIONAL FILM INSTITUTE (ACTOR HUGO DEL CARRIL); AND OF THE GOVERNMENT TV CHANNEL BY ACTOR- THEATRE DIRECTOR JUAN CARLOS GENE PERMIT OF THE FOLLOWING GENERALIZATIONS:

A) IN STATEMENTS OF POLICY UPON APPOINTMENT THE KEY POSITIVE PHRASES ARE " REVOLUTION," " PEOPLE," " NATIONAL" AND " AUTOCHTHONOUS". THE MAIN PEJORATIVES INCLUDE " ELITE," " TRADITIONAL" AND " FOREIGN MODELS."

B) UNLIKE UNIVERSITIES WHICH CAN REPLACE PROFESSORS OVERNIGHT, OTHER CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, ARE TIED TO ADVANCED PLANNING TO A DEGREE THAT MAKES IMMEDIATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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" REVOLUTIONARY" IMPLEMENTATION DIFFICULT OR INVOLVES IMPLICIT SELF- CONTRADICTIONS. NEW GOA APPOINTED DIRECTOR SAN MARTIN THEATRE MUST ASK CAST OF " THE TROJAN WOMEN" TO TAKE A SALARY CUT IF PLAY IS TO CONTINUE. NATIONAL ACTORS UNION LOBBYING FOR INCREASE IN NUMBERS OF RADIO SOAP- OPERAS AS A SOLUTION TO CHRONIC UNEMPLOYMENT BUT PUBLIC DEMAND NOT OVERWHELMING. FIRST PREVIOUSLY CENSORED MOVIE TO APPEAR UNDER AUTHORITY OF NEWLY- APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL FILM INSTITUTE HUGO DEL CARRIL IS A STUDY OF THE WHITE SLAVE TRADE IN ARGENTINA DURING THE THIRTIES. PICTURE STARS HUGO DEL CARRIL. IN A THREE- PART SERIES IN THE LEFTIST DAILY " LA OPINION" LOCAL IMPRESARIOS WHO BRING INTERNATIONAL STARS OF THE MUSIC WORLD TO BA, WERE ON THE DEFENSIVE IN EXPLAINING WHY THEY DON' T PROVIDE MORE LOCAL, NATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR THEIR LARGELY SUBSCRIPTION AUDIENCE. THE EVASIVE ANSWERS DID NOT INCLUDE THE FACT THAT THE SUBSCRIPTION AUDIENCES HAVE PAID FOR INTERNATIONAL- LEVEL CULTURE FOR GENERATIONS AND ARE NOT ABOUT TO SUBSTITUTE REVOLUTIONARY FERVOR FOR PROVEN QUALITY AT EVER- INCREASING TICKET PRICES.

C) BUDGET PROBLEMS OF VIRTUALLY ALL CULTURAL ENTITIES ARE SO SEVERE THAT SOME ARE CUTTING BACK THEIR PRESENTATIONS WHILE OTHERS SIMPLY HAVE NOT BEGUN TO FUNCTION ALTHOUGH THE SEASON IS WELL ALONG. THE NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HAS NOT PLAYED IN OVER A YEAR AND THE CERVANTES THEATRE IS BEING USED FOR LARGELY FOREIGN PERFORMANCES. BUDGET CRISIS CONSIDERABLY ANTEQUATES CAMPORA TAKE- OVER BUT NEW AUTHORITIES ENCOUNTERING EMPTY COFFERS.

COMMENT:

AFTER ONLY THIRTY DAYS IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT HOW MUCH OF THE REVOLUTIONARY TALK IS SIMPLY RHETORIC. UNDOUBTEDLY, HOWEVER, THERE WILL BE MORE OFFICIALLY- SPONSORED ARGENTINE CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS: TANGO CONCERTS IN THE COLON; ARGENTINE PLAYS OF THE " SOCIAL- REALIST" THIRTIES AND FORTIES IN THE SAN MARTIN AND CERVANTES THEATRES; FOLK- LORE CONCERTS IN LUNA PARK AND OVER THE GOVERNMENT RADIO STATIONS. WHETHER THE SOPHISTICATED AND PAYING PUBLIC OF THE COUNTRY WILL SUPPORT THE NEW POLICY REMAINS TO BE SEEN AS DOES THE PRIORITY GIVEN CULTURAL ENTITIES BY THE GOA. THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW MAYOR OF BA WILL HAVE IMPORTANT EFFECTS ON CULTURAL POLICY AND PRACTICE.

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 JUN 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BUENOS04521
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730629/aaaajohw.tel
Line Count: 104
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION CU
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15-Jan-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <06-Feb-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> wfs 980225
Subject: REFLECTIONS ON THE ARGENTINE CULTURAL SCENE
TAGS: SCUL, AR
To: CU
MONTEVIDEO
SANTIAGO
SECSTATE WASHDC
USIA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

